

# The Book Factory

By EDWARD ANTHONY.

## OUR OWN OUTLINE OF SCIENCE

After reading volume three of the fascinating "Outline of Science," edited by Prof. J. A. Thomson and published by the Putnams.

### I.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in a Lodgical way,  
His psychical notions defends.  
He argues so neatly I swallow completely  
His statement that life never ends.

O bards, we'll have reason to dance with delight  
When we stand at the heavenly portals!  
No matter how rotten the pomes we've begotten  
We're going to join the immortals!

### II.

Consider the wonderful lizard. His tail  
Is renewable. (Honest!) In case  
It's bitten away in the course of a fray  
Another one grows in its place.

### III.

The butterwort is a bug-capturing plant  
That's accomplished a steady depletion  
Of insects and things by destroying their wings  
By means of a viscid secretion.

### IV.

At-ta-phi-la—what do you imagine that is?  
Although you may really be bright  
You'll have to confess that you never would guess  
It's a cockroach that's born without sight.

### V.

There are three kinds of matter. What are they, you ask?  
Your ignorance shocks me, alas!  
But since you don't know you will find 'em below:  
There's solid and liquid and gas!

### VI.

Now, how many backboneless creatures do you  
Suppose that the forests contain?  
The author reports there are millions of sorts.  
(Wasps, beetles and bugs, in the main.)

### VII.

Consider the starfish. By some of the species  
Ten millions of eggs have been laid;  
Which proves this illustrious fish is industrious—  
Foolishly so, I'm afraid.

For I don't think a starfish's egg is much good,  
Though I grant that I never have et 'em.  
But even if they were for vittles o. k.  
You'd have to send divers to get 'em.

### VIII.

An atom of oxygen added to two  
Of hydrogen makes, as you oughter  
Be able to guess if a bean you possess,  
A molecule (righto!) of water.

### IX.

Now, what do you think a diamond is made of?  
You don't know the answer? How queer!  
You might have surmised that a diamond's comprised  
Of crystallized carbon, old dear!

### X.

The rat population of England is said  
To reach forty million or more.  
If I were a cat I would leave the States flat  
And sail for Britannia's shore!

### XI.

Cherrapunji, an Indian village, I hear,  
Has the heaviest rainfall that's known to this sphere,  
Nearly five hundred inches descending each year.

### XII.

Here's something of which I was never aware:  
A balloon, as it travels, leaves tracks in the air,  
(Though I never have seen 'em, I'm forced to declare.)

### XIII.

Despite what milady naively supposes,  
Perfume ain't derived from the lilacs and roses.

'Twould probably leave her provoked and splenetic  
To hear that the odors are largely synthetic;

That they are from beans of vanilla created,  
And aren't at all to the flowers related.

They're counterfeit scents, yet they aren't unlawful,  
A state of affairs that is perfectly awful.

### XIV.

Oh, here is to carbon-dioxide! We wouldn't  
Be able to live if to get it we couldn't.  
The ozone would hardly be breathable if it  
Were ever removed, so give thanks as you sniff it!

### XV.

When a sizable air current happens to meet  
Another one of a dissimilar heat  
The result is a hurricane. Beat a retreat  
When you see two large air currents coming together,  
Or you will be wafted away like a feather.  
It's best to stay in during hurricane weather.

## Dr. Canby's Essays

DEFINITIONS. By Henry Seidel Canby.  
Harcourt, Brace & Co.

IN this delightful set of essays Mr. Canby does not chat much about particular books or authors, nor indeed does he confine himself to literature, though he looks at American life through a literary lens. He has chosen his title because his essays, he says, are content with a question mark, and to appraise rather than weigh. Yet often one would like to hand so keen an eye a pair of scales. Here is a lot of ferment, he says, with too frequent caution; no one knows just what this ferment is doing but it is significant of something, and that something may be good; and movements are always more significant than movers. One wishes he would allow his ego to frisk more and take a chance on what the ferment is fermenting into. But one sees in such a book with so discreet a writer how thoroughly Freud has altered our nomenclature and how diagnosticians, the fastidious as well as the sensational, seize upon his vocabulary to fill a long felt void. Mr. Canby thinks that it is the suppressed idealism of the American which takes refuge in sentimental fiction and prefers sweetness to truth; that the American fondness for vacationing and for nature books arises through the descendants of pioneers desiring to plunge into their subconscious; that in literature as in life we are afflicted with that complex of democracy—a distrust of the best. As for the American temper, it is willfully idealistic, determined at all costs to appear innocent and to insist that whatever appears otherwise is un-American. Few, he says, are willing to criticize modern life. We

are less sure of where we are going and where we want to go than people at any other intelligent age in history.

Our literature, thus, is of an age without a theory of living, interested in behavior rather than in character. And our novelists are interested chiefly in their own behavior—the truth about their experience instead of the truth about mankind's. The novel has melted and run down into a diary, with sometimes no unity except that of the personal recording its sensations. It lacks plot, order and economy, while the short story, on the other hand, is at the mercy of the editor's formula and has only too much tidiness of technique. We must give literature the same freedom to invent and experiment as we have given journalism. Literary criticism of the novel has always been feeble in America, and he thinks some of this arises through hereditary disrespect for fiction, although it is difficult to reconcile this with his other opinion that the reviews of acting and plays are much better—for surely Puritan sentiment yielded to fiction before it yielded to the playhouse. He thinks an era of much needed literary criticism is on the way, in spite of the publisher's blurb confusing all standards. The favorite native review is "quote—summarize—quote"; the second favorite is the ego-frisky. With the sterile former at least you know something of the aims of the author; with the latter you detect this only occasionally, but if the frisking is good it is worth while, though sacrificial. I shouldn't like to mention the ego-friskers he approves: to me they seem as merry a band of pirates as ever sunk a ship to see the bubbles rise. But the forceful reviewer leaves Mr. Canby and the reader to nominate whether this is his favorite brand.

## A Boulevardier in the Atlas

OLD MOROCCO AND THE FORBIDDEN ATLAS. By C. E. Andrews. George H. Doran Company.

IN beginning the journey which he describes in this book Mr. Andrews went against the advice of the French authorities, who pointed out to him that he was inviting serious danger, and was almost certain to be robbed if not killed. In either event the authorities would be put to the annoyance of sending troops to punish the natives, which seemed to be their principal concern. So Mr. Andrews disregarded the advice set forth and soon fell in with an adventurous Frenchman in whose company he penetrated to some of the remote corners of interior Morocco. At one point of the journey Mr. Andrews and M. Laperandy suffered mild imprisonment. "Our prison life," Mr. Andrews records, "is a monotonously luxury eating of the lotus day by day. I am awakened in the cool, fresh morning by a cup of Si Lhasen's excellent coffee, just as the sun touches the tops of the orange and almond trees, in which dozens of birds are making a delightfully discordant rivalry. As there is nothing to get up for, I smoke a cigarette and sleep again. Then I am awakened to eat a bowl of vermicelli and a platter of grapes and ripe figs."

It was during this period of pleasant incarceration that the travelers met a character as strange as any encountered on the journey, a French chauffeur who carried the spirits of the boulevards into the depths of the Atlas Mountains. The native caid had bought an automobile, an

old French machine he had picked up at Mogador on the coast, some hundred miles away. The chauffeur had brought it over the bumpy camel trail to Taroudant, and from there the caid by a little scraping and raking had made a kind of road through the plains to Aoulouz. Says Mr. Andrews: "The chauffeur is an amusing character, who has been in Morocco four months without learning a single word of Arabic, and did not even know that the language around him is Berber. He leads a life of infinite laziness and loneliness. He passes the time scrawling rude pictures on the white walls of his room, innumerable hearts pierced with arrows, very décolleté ladies with Cimabue faces all labeled 'Ninette,' and an expressionless side elevation of a 'Madeleine-Bastille' autobus with a portrait of himself at the wheel. The drawings show more sentiment than perspective. Strange, self-exiled soul thinking of his beloved boulevard."

Rafael Sabatini has dramatized his "Scaramouche," according to Houghton Mifflin Company, his publisher, and hopes to have it ready for production by next spring.

A new Basil King novel, "The Dust Flower," is on the Harper list for early October publication. "The Dust Flower" tells the story of a man who knows neither his own mind nor heart. He is obligated to two women but is not sure of his love for either.